



Department of Justice

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THREE MEN INDICTED ON ALIEN SMUGGLING, FRAUD, CONSPIRACY CHARGES

WASHINGTON – A federal grand jury in Pensacola, Fla., has indicted three men for their role in a large alien smuggling visa fraud scheme that illegally brought more than 200 aliens into the area of Destin, Fla., to work in major hotels and resorts, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Gregory R. Miller of the Northern District of Florida announced today.

The 27-count indictment was returned on September 18, 2007, and unsealed on September 20, 2007. The indictment charges Aleksander “Alex” V. Berman, 38; Justin Eric King, 26; and Vyacheslav Adol’fovich Finkel, a.k.a. Stan Finkel, 45, with conspiracy to defraud the United States government and conspiracy to enrich themselves by illegally bringing aliens into the country to work in the hotel industry. The defendants are also charged with alien smuggling, visa fraud and mail fraud.

Berman, a naturalized U.S. citizen, has been in custody since he was arrested and charged by complaint on August 22, 2007. King, a U.S. citizen and resident of Walton County, Fla., was also arrested and charged by complaint on August 22, 2007. Finkel, a legal permanent resident, was arrested on September 20, 2007.

According to the indictment, Berman was the chief financial officer of Eurohouse Holding Corp. (Eurohouse) and shareholder of Woland, Inc. King was an officer of Eurohouse and a Woland employee and Finkel was an employee of Eurohouse. Aliens living outside the United States can apply for non-immigrant visas called “H2-B visas,” which permit the aliens to work in this country for a specified, temporary time period for a specific employer. The indictment alleges that through fraudulent paperwork presented by the defendants on behalf of Eurohouse, H2-B visas were issued for more than 200 aliens. The indictment also alleges that when the defendants could no longer obtain visas through Eurohouse, they created Woland for the sole purpose of continuing the scheme.

Last week, Anna Czerwien, 57, pleaded guilty to a 12-count information, admitting her part in this conspiracy, which began as early as 1999 in Georgia and continued until this year in Florida. Czerwien was convicted of one count of conspiracy to commit visa fraud, ten counts of visa fraud, and one count of conspiracy to encourage and induce aliens to come to, enter and reside in the United States. Sentencing is scheduled before Senior U.S. District Judge Lacey A.

Collier for November 27, 2007.

In the course of her guilty plea, Czerwien admitted that, as part of the conspiracy with Berman and King, she signed paperwork alleging that she was president of various Destin hotels, including the Hilton Sandestin, the Ramada Inn-Destin, and Bay Point Marriott Resort Golf & Yacht Club. Czerwien admitted that she was not the president of these hotels or of any others. Czerwien also admitted that she caused paperwork to be presented to various agencies of the United States which enabled Eurohouse and Woland to obtain visas for aliens so that they could enter the country and work at Florida hotels.

The defendants face a maximum of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on the visa fraud and smuggling charges. Each mail fraud count carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The government is also seeking forfeiture of \$3.2 million.

The investigation of the case began in late 2005. The indictment resulted from joint investigation by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office; the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service; the Department of Labor's Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigation; the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. The Walton County Sheriff's Department assisted in the execution of search and arrest warrants. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Tiffany H. Eggers of the Northern District of Florida and Trial Attorney Arlene Reidy of the Domestic Security Section of the Criminal Division.

An indictment is merely a formal charge by the grand jury. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in United States District Court.

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